

HUMBOLDT'S LETTERS TO VARNHAGEN
VON ENSE.

An individual who was all-powerful under the new *despotic* king of Prussia, in fact the chief of his kitchen-cabinet, to use a term readily understood in this country, is thus handled without gloves by Humboldt: "Of the whole crowd the privy-councillor Niebuhr is the basest rascal—a mean sneak, hypocrite, brimful of hatred and venom. He will be glad to know that I am under the sod." Humboldt's opinions of the king appear to have undergone a great change, that is to say with all his personal friendship for the man he would never shut his eyes to the gradual disappearance of all his good qualities, his political tergiversations, his growing imbecility, stubbornness, and meanness of character. While her presumptuous to the throne, Frederic William seems to have been on the most intimate terms with Humboldt. Even during the first years of his reign he was often influenced in favor of liberal measures by Humboldt's friendly advice. But when his mysticism carried him further and further toward the feudal romanticism of the middle

It seems that Humboldt never let slip an opportunity to castigate the hypocritical cant of the advisers of the king. On one occasion, when he was sitting at the king's table, some measure of the Russian Government was the subject of conversation. Humboldt mentioned the Minister of Public Worship (Cultus). "You are mistaken," the king said to him, "this was not a measure of the Minister of Public Worship, but of the Minister of Enlightenment—two different functionaries altogether." Humboldt without interrupting the strain of his remarks merely said, (probably glancing at M. von Raumer the Prussian Minister of Public Worship): "Ah thank you; it was not, then, the Minister of Public Worship, but he of the *very reverse*, whom I was speaking of." Can it be wondered that the advocates of "darkening" (*Verfinsternng*) hated Humboldt intensely, and that they were always busy to undermine his position at the Court?

On some occasions Humboldt gave way to a feeling of despondency at the seeming hopelessness of the liberal cause in Europe. "Alas!" he sighs (Sept. 13, 1844), "in a few days I shall have lived to see my 75th birthday. Alas! I say, because in 1789 I fancied that, after the lapse of such a period, man-

But if Humboldt was not a believer in revealed religion, he was still less an adherent of either the

Having, in the course of our peregrination through Humboldt's correspondence, safely landed in America, we may as well translate his remarks on American political matters. In a letter of his, dated July 31, 1854, the following remarks occur: "Tha true, a great deal of friendliness is shown to me in the United States; still, I cannot refrain from perceiving that, unfortunately, freedom in America is but a mechanism in the element of utility, but little improving man, nor giving impulses to human nature toward the vindication of truth and the development of correct sentiment (*das Geistige und Gemüthliche anregend*) which ought to be the ultimate object of liberty. Hence, indifference toward the subject of slavery prevails there. But the United States are a Cartesian whirlpool, carrying away everything and grinding it down to a tedious dead level" (*langweiligt niederlegend*). On Sept. 11, 1856 he complains: "Unfortunately, Buchanan will be the next President, not Fremont, the accomplished traveler, who has four times surveyed the overland route to California, and to whom we are indebted for the fact of California having become a Free State." Of John Bigelow's Life of Fremont, Humboldt speaks (Dec. 3, 1856) in flattering terms. In directing Varnhagen's attention to an article upon the slavery question, he writes: "In the *Journal des Debats* you will find an excellent article of Laboulaye upon the 'domestic institutions' and the extension of Slavery over territory heretofore free by the infamous (*schändliche*) Pierce." Upon the reception of the news of Buchanan's election, he exclaims (Nov. 21, 1856): "Thus, then, the infamous party which sells negro children of fifty-pound weight, which confers (upon Brooks) canes of honor as the Russian Emperor does awards of honor, which demonstrates that all white laborers might better be slaves than freemen—has prevailed. What an outrage!" It will be seen from this that he took a very lively interest in the Presidential election of 1856. In fact, so strongly did he on every occasion express his sympathies with the Republican cause, that so late as Sept. 9, 1858, he was quite surprised at receiving anything like polite treatment at the hands of Mr. Buchanan's Administration. Under that date, he sends to Varnhagen a letter of "the American Minister of War" Mr.

ELEMENTS OF CHEMICAL PHYSICS. By JOSHUA L. COOKER, Jr. FIVE pp. 528. Little, Brown & Co.

The point of view from which the science of chemistry is regarded in this volume, is the rationale of the principles involved in the process of weighing and measuring small quantities of matter. Since the time of Lavoisier, he first used the balance in investigating chemical phenomena, the progress of the science has been mainly owing to successive improvements in these processes. Without a theoretical knowledge of the principles on which they are founded, the chemical experimenter is exposed to numerous and constant sources of error. The author of this work, who occupies the chair of chemistry and mineralogy in Harvard College, has here attempted an analytical exposition of these principles, while, at the same time, he has taken care to record the latest results of chemical inquiry, in the present rapidly developing condition of the science. The volume is distributed under the titles of the "General Properties of Matter," the "Three States of Matter" (solid, liquid, and gaseous), "Heat," and "Weighing and Measuring." Although it forms a complete treatise in itself on the topics to which it is devoted, it is intended to serve as the first volume of an extended work on the Philosophy of Chemistry. It is written in the sumptuous typographical style of the Cambridge press, and is illustrated by numerous plates and diagrams.

THE LIFE OF FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, BY THOMAS CARLYLE. From the second London edition. 12mo., pp. 280. Sheldon & Co.

In the preface to the second edition of this work, published in London fifteen years ago, Carlyle enters a trenchant complaint against the "parties of the private-species" that were preparing to reprint it on their own account. "There are books," he says, "as there

LITERARY.

—M. Cousin has torn himself away from the bonds of Madame de Longueville and the fair enchantresses of the Fronde, and resumed the grave functions, which won him a high name in philosophy, by the completion of his first-collected edition of the "Writings of Abelard." The works of this founder of the scholastic philosophy (not forgetting his Letters) are the first rendered accessible to the student and M. Cousin has drawn attention in his preface to the fact that Descartes (for whom he rendered the same service formerly), who was the destroyer of the system, sprang from the same Province and neighborhood—Brittany—thus producing its originator.

—Three volumes of the great Imperial Collection of